Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes
Canada

News Release

March 27, 1995

THE CRTC AUTHORIZES FORMATION OF THE RADIOMÉDIA AM NETWORK WITH SAFEGUARDS TO ENSURE PROGRAMMING QUALITY

OTTAWA/HULL -- The CRTC today approved the transfer of the assets of radio station CKAC Montreal to Télémédia Communications Inc. and Radiomutuel Inc., equal share partners of Radiomédia S.E.N.C. The Commission also approved the transfer of the assets of CHRC Quebec City to Radiomédia Inc., a company owned by Télémédia and Radiomutuel. These two transactions have allowed the creation of the Radiomédia French-language AM radio information network (Decisions CRTC 95-118 and 95-119). Today's decisions were made following the CRTC's December 1994 public hearing held in Montreal.

"The CRTC recognizes that the restructuring of the AM broadcasting undertakings of Télémédia and Radiomutuel in Quebec had become necessary, partly owing to the difficult economic situation faced by AM radio in the past few years and the significant losses it has incurred," said CRTC Chairman Keith Spicer. "The measures approved today should help create favourable conditions for ensuring the survival of news and public affairs radio with a predominantly spoken-word content."

"The short licence terms granted to Radiomédia will enable us to review within a reasonable period the implementation of the programming proposals put forward by the licensee," Mr. Spicer said. "In particular, we will examine the steps taken to ensure an adequate level of news and quality programming."

The licences granted to Radiomédia will be valid for four years, until August 31, 1999. Besides CKAC Montreal and CHRC Quebec City, the Radiomédia network will consist of a number of affiliated AM stations, including those owned by either Télémédia or Radiomutuel. Radiomédia is to set up a new agency to provide the network with a provincial, national and international news service.

To guarantee an adequate level of news

The Commission has imposed certain safeguards to allay concerns about the possible effects of the restructuring on the quality of the news. In particular, the licences for CKAC and the network are subject to the condition of licence that Radiomédia produce and broadcast at least 16 hours and 36 minutes of news per week.

The Commission also notes the licensee's statement that it will maintain continuous parliamentary coverage in Quebec City and Ottawa while each parliament is in session.

... and quality programming

On December 21, 1994, Radiomédia submitted to the CRTC a set of guidelines on spoken-word content, applicable to both CKAC and CHRC. Given the many complaints and prosecutions against CHRC in recent years for abusive comments, the Commission has made it a condition of licence that the station comply in full with Radiomédia's spoken-word guidelines.

The Commission also notes Radiomédia's intention to give priority in CHRC broadcasts to local programming during prime listening hours -- between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. This measure should help maintain CHRC's local identity.

The CRTC also notes Radiomédia's commitment to pay, for each of its two stations, an annual contribution of $25,000 to Musicaction as support for Canadian talent, over a seven-year period.

Finally, the stations are required to comply with the Canadian Association of Broadcasters guidelines on gender portrayal and on advertising aimed at children. The Commission also expects Radiomédia to submit within six months an action plan for ensuring employment equity in each of its undertakings.

Transfer of CHOI-FM

Today the Commission also approved the transfer of control of Les Enterprises de radiodiffusion de la Capitale Inc. to Télémédia Communications Inc. Télémédia thus becomes owner of CHOI-FM Quebec City as well as CITF-FM Quebec City which it currently owns (decision CRTC 95-120).

In these circumstances, the Commission requires Télémédia to respect its commitment to dispose of CHOI-FM. It is a longstanding policy of the CRTC that two radio undertakings of the same type serving the same market in the same language must not belong to the same owner. Télémédia must submit to the CRTC an application to transfer ownership or control of CHOI-FM within the next six months.

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